



Implementing a Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program to Reduce Tobacco Use

Public Health Problem

In 1999, cigarette smoking was responsible for an estimated 2,400 deaths in Nebraska, and tobacco-related health care expenditures cost the state an estimated \$419 million annually. Projections based on current data are that about 45,000 Nebraskan youth will become smokers and die prematurely as adults because of a smoking-related illness.

Evidence That Prevention Works

Aggressive and comprehensive tobacco control programs in California, Florida, Massachusetts, and Oregon have produced substantial declines in cigarette use. In California, home to one of the longest-running tobacco control programs, rates of lung and bronchial cancer have declined 14%.

Program Example

The Tobacco-Free Nebraska program is a multifaceted, comprehensive tobacco control program that incorporates community-based initiatives that involve a wide range of strategies (such as compliance checks with retailers and restaurants related to sales to minors and smoke-free environments) and target a variety of audiences, from at-risk high school youth to policy makers to racial and ethnic minorities. The program also supports state initiatives, including a media campaign and toll-free quit line, which are targeted to youth and adults. Nebraska's program also increases local tobacco control capacity by training people to develop and implement tobacco control strategies and to monitor and evaluate how successful these efforts are. Ongoing tobacco-use surveys are used to track patterns and changes in tobacco use in the state. In addition, an independent firm conducts ongoing evaluation of the program. Another program effort is the Teen Tobacco Education and Prevention Project, which provides high school students with the opportunity to compete for \$100,000 grants to design and create antitobacco messages and campaigns for their peers.

Implications

When tobacco control programs are sustained over time, reductions in tobacco use occur. By implementing strategies that have been successful and following nationally recognized standards, Nebraska is poised for success in reducing tobacco use. This program demonstrates the importance of a comprehensive program to ensure reductions in tobacco use.